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DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Date: November 24, 2004

To: Local Health Departments
Hospitals
Nursing Homes
Clinics that indicated vaccine need on the Influenza Vaccine Survey

From: James Vergeront, M.D., Interim Director
Bureau of Communicable Diseases and Preparedness

Re: Updated definition of health care worker eligible to receive influenza vaccine
Influenza vaccine sources
Influenza antiviral use at a glance

The purpose of this memo is to update the previous definition of a health care worker who is eligible to receive influenza vaccine and provide information on sources of influenza vaccine.

Effective today, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) has revised the definition of health care worker to include all health care workers who routinely have close contact (i.e., come within 3 feet) with patients. In order to qualify, an individual does not need to have hands-on patient care responsibilities. Examples of individuals who would meet this revised definition include:

- All individuals who met the previous definition
- Persons who work in a health care facility and have the following responsibilities:
 - Administrative staff
 - Reception staff
 - Chaplains
 - Social workers
 - Dietary staff
 - Housekeeping staff
 - Maintenance workers
 - Pharmacists
 - Occupational and recreational therapists
 - Patient representatives
 - Volunteers
 - Other health care workers such as school, occupational health and parish nurses, and health aides

Health care facilities may need more influenza vaccine because of this revision. Results of a statewide influenza vaccine survey conducted last week by local health departments indicate that a surplus of vaccine exists in many counties. If your facility needs influenza vaccine, contact your Local Health Department for information on facilities that have surplus vaccine.

If influenza vaccine supplies within the state have been exhausted, you may order vaccine through the DHFS. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has apportioned additional doses of influenza vaccine for states and states are responsible for allocating vaccine to providers in their respective jurisdictions. The DHFS will transmit your order to CDC and the vaccine will be shipped through a distributor. The distributor will contact customers with shipment and purchase order specifications and ship vaccine to these customers. Requests for a particular formulation of preservative-containing vaccine (10 dose vials versus pre-filled syringes) cannot be honored and the number of doses ordered must be a multiple of 10. To order CDC-apportioned influenza vaccine, complete the enclosed Influenza Vaccine Request form and fax it back to the Immunization Program at 608-267-9493 by December 1, 2004. A list of distributors from which to choose is on the back of the order form. Prior to submitting the order to CDC, a search will be made for vaccine available within Wisconsin. If vaccine is available, you will be contacted and referred to the facility that has surplus vaccine for sale.

Also enclosed in this mailing for your reference is a one-page summary of the CDC's recommendations on the use of antivirals for prophylaxis and treatment during the 2004-05 influenza season.

Enclosures: Influenza Vaccine Request form
2004-05 Influenza Season Antiviral Use at a Glance

CC: Regional Office Directors